

Joan Sohn

Public Meeting of April 15, 2019 to review an application for an Official Plan Amendment and Amendment to the Zoning By-law submitted by Fernbrook Homes (Parkside) Ltd. for 70 Pioneer Trail.

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Fernbrook Homes (Parkside) Ltd. has submitted an application to amend the current low density zoning at 70 Pioneer Trail in order to build 43 condo units. It is important to discuss the areas that increased density and this development will impact, why they are an issue, and why this proposal should not be approved.

1. Not in Keeping With Provincial and City of Barrie Density Guidelines
2. Destruction of the Quality of the Existing neighbourhood.
3. Decreased Safety for Families and kids.
4. Inadequate Parking and Vehicle Access
5. Community segregation
6. Environmental Destruction

In addition to being important on their own, these issues run contrary to the City of Barrie Housing Goals in the Approved Official Plan of January 2018. As such, this development should not be approved.

## 1. Not in Keeping With City Of Barrie or Provincial Density Guidelines

One of the City's housing goals, as expressed in the Approved Official Plan of January 2018, is "to promote building designs and densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support and contribute to safe, vibrant, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly streetscapes."

Intensification of a new adjacent neighbourhood is not intended to destroy the quality of the established neighbourhood.

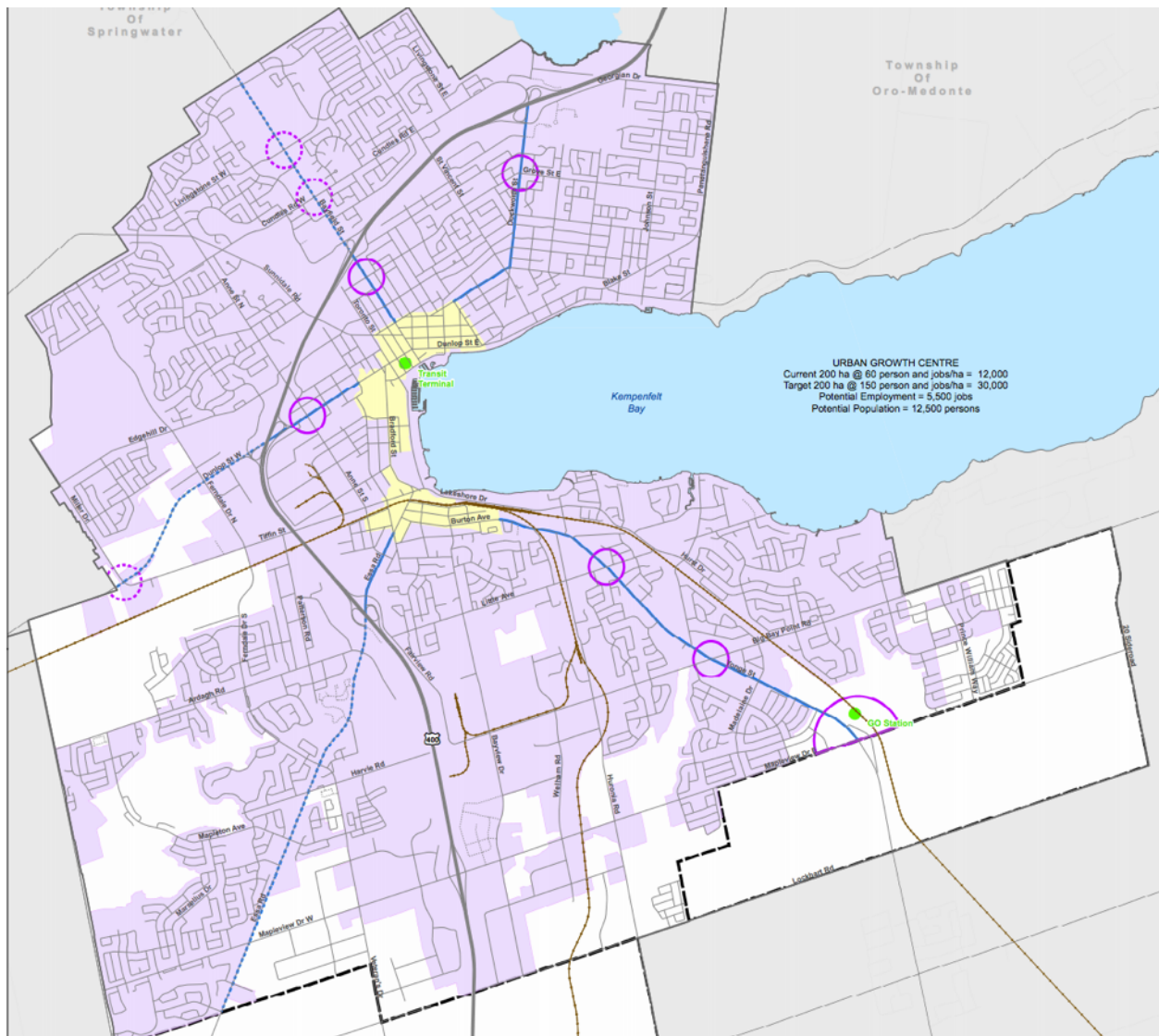
The neighbourhood has not changed, the environmental sensitivity has not changed, but the Fernbrook Homes Justification Report states the area demands intensification to meet provincial goals in the Provincial Places to Grow (PTG) Growth Plan. The Provincial guidelines do not suggest that every undeveloped property within the City of Barrie is suitable for intensification simply because nearby infrastructure exists.

The PTG encourages creating complete communities. The Province encourages intensification within intensification areas and nodes and 70 Pioneer Trail is not within an intensification node; the closest intensification node is 3.8kms away at Big Bay Point Rd and Yonge Street. An example of an appropriate intensification project is the townhouse development underway there now at 526 Big Bay Point Road. It is an easy walk to food shopping, banks, drug stores, post office, restaurants, gas stations, LCBO, transit and The Barrie Library.

70 Pioneer Trail does not have easy pedestrian access to shopping, services, or transit, and as such is not an appropriate area for intensification. And as a gated private condominium development, hidden from the public behind their gate and a long drive, Fernbrook Homes does not show an intention for it to become part of the existing complete community.

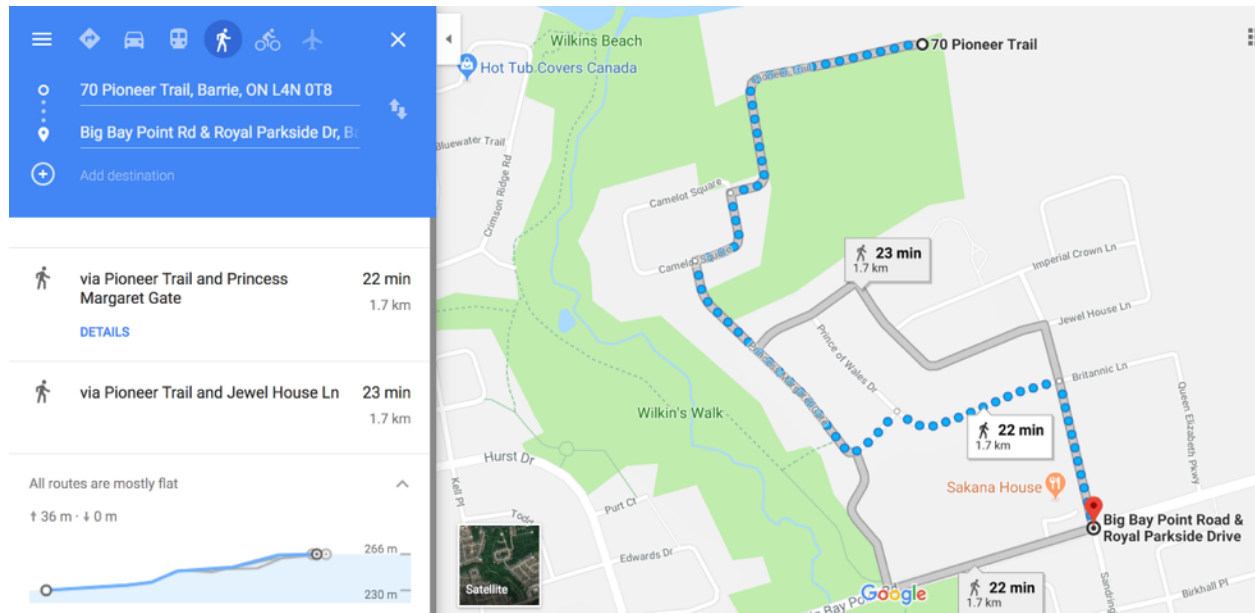
## Barrie Official Plan, 2018, Schedule 1: Intensification Areas

The Intensification Areas are the purple circles



## Distance from 70 Pioneer Trail to Nearest Transit stop

source: Google Maps



The Fernbrook Homes Justification Report states that 70 Pioneer Trail's closest transit stop is located at the corner of Big Bay Point and Royal Parkside Drive at the entrance to the subdivision lands that one would travel through to reach the subject lands. Commercial uses exist at this location would be the closest commercial uses to the subject lands approximately 700 metres away which are longer than a 10 minute walk but a short 5 minute drive.

This part of the report is very misleading. Their 700 meter measurement is an unrealistic direct line, which in real life is not practical nor possible.

Google Maps shows a different picture with several driving, walking and biking routes on existing streets through the subdivision to the bus stop, and they are all close to 1.7 km, more than twice Fernbrook's measurements. Notice that Google's estimates are from the cul-de-sac; the built townhouses will be farther into the woods.

The subdivision is on a slope and Google Maps shows the altitude difference between 70 Pioneer Trail and the transit stop is 33 metres, the height of a 10 story building. For reference, please note that Barrie City Hall is 34 metres high and has 10 stories.

The estimated walk time from the cul-de-sac is 22 minutes and the bicycle time is 8 minutes, if you are a strong cyclist. I am not sure how many seniors will be prepared to walk uphill more than 20 minutes to get to the bus stop. The closest store to pick up eggs and milk is farther away, at the Shoppers Drug Mart at Big Bay Point Road and Prince William Way, another 600m away.

70 Pioneer Trail is isolated from the amenities suggested in the Places to Grow Growth Plan. It is not a site for intensification.

## 2. Destruction of the Quality of the Existing neighbourhood.

What we have now are safe, vibrant, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly streetscapes. Pioneer Trail has no sidewalks but it is well used by pedestrians. The entire neighbourhood walks in the street.

We jog, walk our dogs, meet with our neighbours, cycle, skateboard, and depend on the modest number of drivers to slow down for us. Walkers from the subdivision usually make a circuit on the streets, adding the north/south trail through the EP land.

More traffic will make Pioneer Trail unsafe.

Adding 43 homes to the end of Pioneer Trail, a waterfront property with essentially one way to access it from Big Bay Point Road, can add hundreds of vehicles on our streets on a weekend day; most households will own 2 vehicles and will be visited by friends and family who drive there on weekends. As a waterfront resident for the last 30 years, I can attest to the weekend influx of friends and family at my home. It's natural, but that sort of influx can translate to many hundreds of vehicle trips passing through the Royal Park subdivision, Camelot Square and Pioneer Trail.

During the week the seniors in the townhouses will continued to be serviced by the usual vehicular traffic: cleaners, taxis and ride sharing, food delivery, FedEx, Amazon, UPS, Canada Post, telephone and cable, personal support workers, home maintenance and repair people, and their condominium's own garbage, recycling, property and lawn maintenance, and snow removal vehicles. Senior owners may come to require more specialized transit such as Barrie Accessible Community Transportation Service (BACTS).

Each visit means 2 runs through our neighbourhood, one in and one out.

And 70 Pioneer Trail is isolated enough that the seniors will drive everywhere.

### 3. Decreased Safety for Families and Kids.

A traffic impact study was done to assuage the concerns the residents of Camelot Square expressed at a Neighbourhood Meeting. The 2016 Traffic Impact Study was prepared for Fernbrook Homes by JD Northcote Engineering Inc. It was poorly designed if there was an intention to address the neighbourhood concern. The vehicle count was done in December on a weekday, a sample period chosen to focus on the length of time it would take commuters to exit or re-enter the subdivision during rush hours. The report concludes that the development would not cause any significant delay or congestion.

This is not the focus that concerns the residents of Camelot Square. They purchased their homes expecting to have very little traffic in a child-friendly neighbourhood that does not have sidewalks both sides of the street. The 2016 Traffic Impact Study addressed convenience for motorists and did not consider the safety of the families throughout our neighbourhood.

The entire Royal Park subdivision is family friendly and adding hundreds of vehicles will impact the kids who play basketball at the ends of their driveways or play street hockey, as well as every child on a bicycle. It will impact the families who walk to Wilkins Beach, the closest public access to Lake Simcoe; the route to the beach is around Camelot Square and onto a trail around the stormwater management pond just north of Camelot Square. It will impact the children who walk home from the school bus stops. A warm weekend or afternoon brings people to the streets and counting cars in December would never capture the whole picture.

#### 4. Inadequate Parking and Vehicle Access

The Traffic Impact Study discussed the traffic on the public roads but did not mention the traffic within the 70 Pioneer Trail development.

A good question was asked at the Neighbourhood Meeting on March 6: If all the guest parking spots are full within the condominium boundaries, where will visitors park? The condominium streets, unlike standard city streets, are not wide enough for on-street parking. Would visitors be expected to park on Pioneer Trail? The planner's quick answer was that Pioneer Trail would be too far away for extra parking. The question remains unanswered.

There are some as yet unconsidered issues concerning the gate to the private road. I inquired at the Neighbourhood Meeting and it seems that the entrance gate will not be manned. There are no provisions for a place for a vehicle to turn around if the resident the driver is looking for is unavailable and the gate cannot be opened. With 43 townhouses, this could lead to a number of vehicles trapped on the street, unable to move, disrupting traffic in the cul-de-sac as well as on Pioneer Trail. And it could block access to the home at 68 Pioneer Trail. The planner from Jones says that it will be discussed in the future.

These questions need to be considered and answered, now, not after the fact.

It is essential that traffic on the cul-de-sac not be impeded. It must continue to function for all the normal traffic on our street, the Police patrols, garbage pickup, snow removal, the residential



traffic, and the intermittent stream of vehicles carrying people curious to see what is on the waterfront who turn around in the cul-de-sac.

If Pioneer Trail is too far away to park, there is no street parking and too little guest parking, and there is no space for a turn-around at the gate, there clearly is not adequate space to build the proposed 43 units.

## 5. Community segregation

Pioneer Trail has been a neighbourhood since the 1940s when lots along the lake were severed and sold to cottagers. By the 1980s some of the lakeside cottages were replaced with substantial homes. In 2000 plans were being made to develop the Royal Park subdivision with hundreds of homes on the hill, spanning the area between the Bob Rumble Home for the Deaf and Camelot Square. We have become one neighbourhood.

The developers of 70 Pioneer Trail do not suggest that their owners will become part of our neighbourhood. To the contrary, their Justification Report states:

**The community will be gated** for both security purposes and for the residents of the subdivision to enjoy the **exclusivity of living in this area.** An entrance feature will be provided at the gate to the development which will depict the name of the development and be appropriately designed and landscaped to complement the design of the units and site itself.

There is no intention to complement the neighbourhood.

As well, their gate will cut off public access to some of the waterfront Environmental Protection land deeded to the city as a condition to receive the Low Density residential zoning granted by the OMB in 2006. The owners in 70 Pioneer Trail will have exclusive use of our public EP land along with their own waterfront.



An earlier Fernbrook Homes interpretation of their gate, designed to match a previously planned building style.



The entrance to 70 Pioneer Trail, photographed from the cul-de-sac on March 30, 2019. Please note the location of the driveway to 68 Pioneer Trail at the left of the photo.

## 6. Environmental Destruction

Over and over, the City of Barrie has shown its resistance to development at 70 Pioneer Trail since the land was annexed from Innisfil in 1987.

The 1982 ESA study for the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority, prepared by Dr. Derek Coleman, identified the area as the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) known as Kempenfelt Estates. In 2003 Dr Coleman advised Barrie City Council that all the land north of the Algonquin Ridge should be zoned Environmental Protection. (The Algonquin Ridge runs east/west between Camelot Square and the Royal Park subdivision. The Algonquin Ridge is recognized as protected.)

70 Pioneer Trail is within the **Kempenfelt Estates Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) in the approved Bayshore Secondary Plan**. The Environmental Assessment in that plan was the 1987 Ecoplans Study, which identified the area as Environmentally Significant.

More recently, in the **Approved 1996 Official Plan for the City of Barrie**, the **approved Innis-Shore Secondary Plan** identified the 70 Pioneer Trail property as an **Open Space/ Special Policy Area**, with the clear intention to restrict development on the site, and a wish to have the entire property function as EP : An area north of the tableland on lands owned by The Ontario Mission for the Deaf was shown as Special Policy Areas on the Land Use Concept Plan. Such areas are not considered to

# Innis-Shore Secondary Plan 1996 Land Use Concept plan

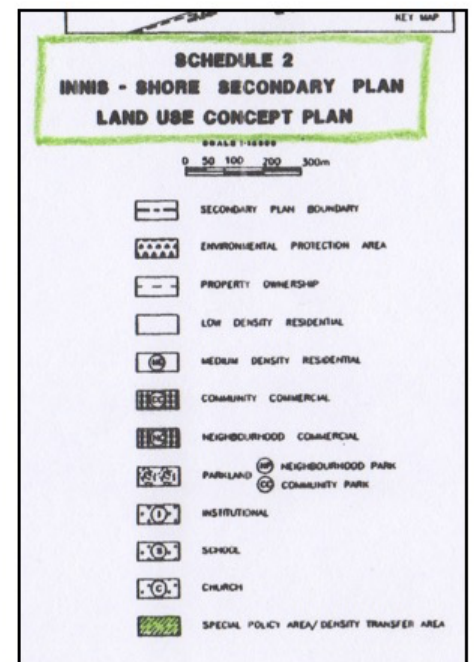
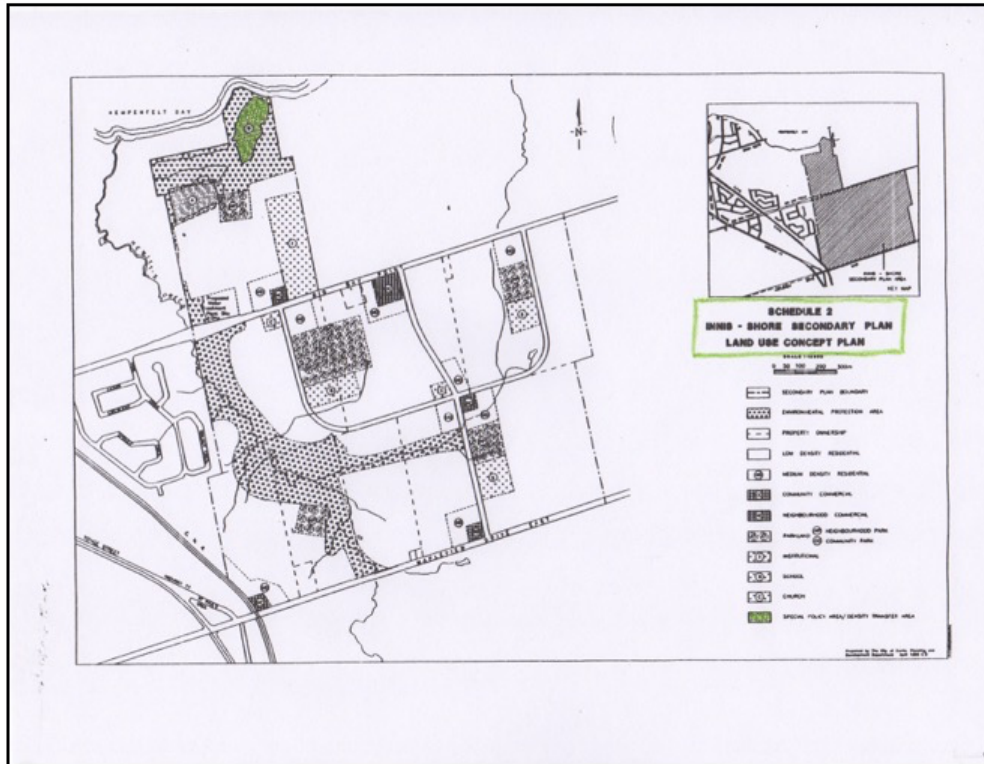


exhibit the same environmental characteristics as the surrounding Environmental Protection Area and were assigned a **density transfer factor to the tableland area of the Mission's lands, conditional on the dedication of the Special Policy Areas to the City per policy 2.5.6 b.**

The Ontario Mission for the Deaf chose to decline the density transfer.

In 2006 The Ontario Mission for the Deaf, then owner of 70 Pioneer Trail, appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. In her decision ( OMB Decision 0387, February 6, 2006 ) member S.D. Rogers commented, “There is a long history between the City and OMD which has involved many Ontario Municipal Board hearings and at least two court cases.”

The result of this hearing was her decision to re-designate the Special Policy area and some Environmental Protection area to Low Density Residential and Open Space. As part of the OMB decision, the remainder of the property, identified as Environmental Protection, was deeded to the City of Barrie.

The 2009 Site Plan Control, to allow 19 residential units at 70 Pioneer Trail, is a result of the 2006 OMB hearing. This Low Density use was not assigned capriciously; it was a significant step taken by S. D. Rogers, OMB member, who had been asked to consider an Environmental Protection status for the entire property. In her decision she wrote that there had been “cogent and persuasive presentations” requesting the preservation of a larger portion of the shoreline area.

She continued, “much will depend the manner in which the residential development proceeds and the safeguards and regulations which are put in place to ensure a development which is sensitive to, respectful of, and protective of the natural features of the area.”

Fernbrook Homes wishes to have the zoning changed from her Low-Density decision to Mid-Density to allow the construction of 43 townhouses, more than twice the number of now permitted residential units, creating more than twice the amount of traffic and impact on the waterfront and neighbourhood.

Questions were asked at the March 6 meeting concerning the future use of the waterfront at 70 Pioneer Trail. Twice, the planner deflected the question, remarking that there are no waterfront plans in this current condominium proposal. This is yet another consideration before you allow this project to proceed.

### **In closing**

I hope I have given you a sense of the neighbourhood that is the combined Pioneer Trail and Royal Park subdivision. It is a good place to live. It fulfills the City of Barrie's housing goals as set out in the Approved Official Plan of January 2018. There is balance.

Adding 43 townhouses at 70 Pioneer Trail will be a detriment to the existing neighbourhood. It is the wrong project for the site. The ensuing traffic will be destructive and counter to Barrie's housing goals that include recreational walking and cycling. Adding 19 homes will have an impact but not as significantly as 43 homes will.

**Anticipated problems, like traffic and waterfront use, should be addressed before you permit an expanded zoning by-law.**



As you can see, there are a myriad of problems associated with the planned development at 70 Pioneer Trail.

These issues are in direct conflict with the City of Barrie Housing Goals in the Approved Official Plan of January 2018. As such, this development should not be approved.

I request that you consider these issues I have brought to your attention:

**1. Not in Keeping With Provincial and City of Barrie Density Guidelines**

This is not an intensification area with reasonable proximity to transit and shopping

**2. Destruction of the Quality of the Existing neighbourhood.**

What we have now are safe, vibrant, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly streetscapes. The increased traffic will ruin the quality of the community.

**3. Decreased Safety for Families and kids.**

The traffic study does not address the issue of street safety, a major concern for homeowners.

**4. Inadequate Parking and Vehicle Access**

Projected vehicular traffic exceeds the proposed parking accommodation and the gate will impact traffic on Pioneer Trail

**5. Community segregation**

The gated 70 Pioneer Trail Condominium development is intentionally insular and will not meld with the neighbourhood it will effect. It will not build community.

**6. Environmental Destruction**

Only Low-density residential zoning was approved after 30 years of environmentalist opposition to development.

Please recognize that a zoning of Low-Density Residential, permitting 19 single homes at 70 Pioneer Trail, is the maximum this existing neighbourhood can tolerate. I urge you to deny Fernbrook Homes' application to increase the current zoning to Mid-Density.

Thank you

Joan Sohn

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Reports and documents I have referenced

**1. 70 Pioneer Trail, Fernbrook Homes (Parkside) Ltd, Planning Justification Report**

Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment: Revised February 2019

**2. Traffic Impact Study for Fernbrook Homes Inc., December 30th, 2016**

JD Northcote Engineering Inc., 86 Cumberland Street, Barrie, ON

**3. The Barrie Official Plan, 2018**

**4. The Innis-Shore Secondary Plan,** Amendment 116 to the Official Plan for the Barrie Planning Area, April 1996

**5. Ontario Municipal Board,** Decision 0387, February 6, 2006, S.D.Rogers, Member

**6. Environmental Assessment Report prepared by Ecoplans,** part of the City of Barrie Bayshore Secondary Plan, 1987

**7. City of Barrie Waterfront Master Plan,** March 1999

**8. Google maps**

**9. The City of Barrie Intensification Study,** April 2009



